CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE EMP1 THE CH'IN AND HAN DYNASTIES (B.C. 221-A.D, 220)

THE CH'IN DYNASTY: SHIH HUANG TI

THE triumph of Ch'in, as we have suggested, was not the work of one man. Many had had a part—Duke Mu, Duke Hsiao, Wei Yang, and others whom we have not named. A system rather than an individual was victor. It is not strange, therefore, that the conqueror sought to reorganize and rule the newly won Empire by the methods which had proved so effective in his own state. In doing so he proved unable to perpetuate the power of his house, but he began a new day for Eastern Asia. He outlined an organization which, with many alterations, was that by which the Middle Kingdom was governed until A.D. 1912 and which, with occasional failures of longer or shorter duration, held together with remarkable success the vast region which is China. Moreover, in welding all China into one political unit, the conqueror, possibly quite unconsciously, brought in part to fruition the hopes of many dreamers. A large proportion of the thinkers of the Chou had conceived of China as a political whole, including all of civilized mankind.

With the progressive disintegration of the power of the Chou, the aspiration had seemed to be further and further from reality. Now it was translated into fact, but in a decidedly different form from that which some of them had visualized.

The leader immediately responsible for this revolutionary development was Cheng—better known to history as

Shih Huang Ti. His great assistant and chief minister was Li Ssu. Li Ssii, one of those migrant scholar-statesmen for whom the later years of the Chou had been famous, was a native of the state of Ch'u, and had, together with Han Fei Tzii, the distinguished Legalist, been a pupil of Hsiin Tzu. Hsiin Tzii, although usually classified with the Confucianists, perhaps was influenced by the Legalists. Es-